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Chapter 1 : Matchbox Diecast and Toy Vehicles | eBay

*Concise Catalogue of Series Matchbox Toys by Lesney [Geoffrey Leake] on blog.quintoapp.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers.*

The two men were not related by blood; they had been school friends and served together in the Royal Navy during World War II. Shortly after they founded the company, Rodney Smith introduced to his partner a man named John "Jack" Odell, an engineer he had met in a previous job at D. Odell initially rented a space in the Lesney building to make his own die-casting products, but he joined the company as a partner in that same year. Lesney originally started operations in a derelict pub in north London The Rifleman, but later, as finances allowed, changed location several times before finally moving to a factory in Hackney which became synonymous with the company. In late they received a request for parts for a toy gun. Seeing no future for the company, Rodney Smith left in . The first model toy they produced in "a die-cast road roller based clearly on a Dinky model the industry leader in die-cast toy cars at that time" in hindsight proves to be the first of perhaps three major milestones on the path to their eventual destiny. It established transportation as a viable and interesting theme; other similar models followed, including a cowboy-influenced covered wagon and a soap-box racer. The company continued to produce non-toy items; of those marketed directly by Lesney, one of the more popular ones was a Fishing bait press, well liked by British anglers at the time. The next crucial milestone was the production of a replica of the Royal State Coach in , the year of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Two versions were created, the first in a larger scale, followed by a smaller-scale model. It was this second model that sold over a million units, a massive success at the time. The profits from the sales provided valuable capital for further investments. The final and decisive stepping stone in the pre-Matchbox era was a toy which Mr. Odell designed for his daughter: Her school only allowed children to bring toys that could fit inside a matchbox, so Mr. Odell crafted a scaled-down version of the Lesney green and red road roller. Based on the aforementioned size restriction, the idea was born to sell the model in a replica matchbox "thus also yielding the name of the series which would propel Lesney to worldwide, mass-market success. The road roller ultimately became the first of the Matchbox miniature range; a dump truck and a cement mixer completed the original three-model release. This distribution was documented on the boxes themselves, on which the text "A Moko Lesney product" appeared. By the end of the decade, Lesney was able to buy Moko, marketing its products under its own name from that point on. A period of great expansion, tremendous profit, and recognition followed: For further details on the history of the Matchbox series, see the article Matchbox brand. On July 11, , after years of difficulties due to the economic climate in Britain at the time, Lesney went bankrupt and into receivership. Competing companies Mettoy Corgi and Meccano Dinky also suffered the same fate. Jack Odell went on to form a new company, Lledo, where he produced models similar to early Matchbox Models of Yesteryear. Since , the Matchbox brand has been owned by Mattel, creators of Hot Wheels. Some of the tools and dies created in the Lesney era were still used in the Matchbox line of Non-Matchbox Lesney toys[edit] Although the name Lesney became synonymous with Matchbox, the company produced several toys previous to and into the Matchbox era which were not sold under that famous moniker. Today, these are highly collectible items. Road Roller, later scaled down to become Matchbox no. The third model, the no.

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Chapter 2 : matchbox catalogue | eBay

Matchbox Series Lesney England #13 Dodge Wreck tow Truck Wrecker BP yel grn.

Lesney Products The Matchbox name originated in as a brand name of the British die-casting company, Lesney Products , whose reputation would be moulded by [2] John W. It was designed for his daughter: This toy ultimately became the first of the miniature range. A dump truck and a cement mixer completed the original three-model release that marked the starting point for the mass-market success of the Matchbox series. Additional models – mostly British at first – continued to be added to the line throughout the decade, including cars such as an MG Midget TD , a Vauxhall Cresta , a Ford Zodiac , and many others. To make such miniatures, the designers took detailed photographs of the real models, even obtaining some original blueprints. This enabled them to make models with surprisingly high levels of detail, despite the small scale. The size of the models and their clever packaging allowed Matchbox to occupy a market niche barely touched by the competition and certainly not by Dinky ; the associated price advantage made Matchbox models affordable for every child, and helped establish Matchbox as a household word for small toy cars, whatever the brand. Boxes in that era mentioned this, with the text "A Moko Lesney" appearing on each. By , Matchbox was the biggest-selling brand of small die-cast model cars worldwide. Some even featured steering, including the pressure-based AutoSteer system debuting in The line was very diverse, including lorries, buses, tractors, motorcycles, and trailers as well as standard passenger cars. The three dominant brands in the world at the time, all British-made - Dinky , Matchbox and Corgi , were very successful. Each had its own market niche and its own strong reputation, while innovations and advances by one were adopted by the others within a matter of a few years. The Models of Yesteryear, introduced in , were renditions of classic vehicles from the steam and early automotive eras. Accessories Packs were also introduced in and included petrol pumps, garages, and the like. Major Packs, which were larger-scale models, often of construction vehicles, were added in The King Size series of larger-scale trucks and tractors was added in and was diversified from onwards to include passenger car models in a scale similar to that used by Corgi and Dinky. Major Packs had been absorbed into the King Size range by Competition and crisis[edit] However, the main focus at Matchbox continued to be their smaller cars. These models, although less true to scale and often featuring fantasy vehicles, were attractive, painted in bright metallic colours and fitted with racing-style "mag" wheels and slick tires, and were marketed aggressively and with numerous accessory products, such as race track sets and the like. The Hot Wheels line often featured models that were decidedly American. At the same time, the other major market the UK was also under attack by competitors. The result was, at first, a strange but interesting line of fast-wheeling cars, trucks, and trailers, basically complete in Racing track sets and the like were also released to allow children to race their cars. Starting in and particularly in , new models appeared with wider tyres, and older models including trucks still in the line were retooled to fit slicks. The King Size range was similarly updated, including a division into Super Kings mostly trucks, but also with mag wheels and Speed Kings cars. A short-lived series of rechargeable electric cars, called Scorpions, was released as well, to compete with similar products from Hot Wheels Sizzlers and Corgi ElectroRockets. By the mids, Matchbox was again a force on the world market, having completed the transition and having even updated its line to include some fantasy vehicles. Expansion in the Superfast era[edit] In an attempt to reap more benefits from the regained popularity of the Matchbox brand, a last period of great expansion started with the introduction of multiple new lines, including the Sky Busters range of aircraft including current and historical private, commercial, and military planes , Battle Kings military models, Sea Kings naval models, Adventure science fiction models, and the Two Packs series, which revisited the traditional Matchbox idea of a model and an associated trailer. Second editions of the Battle Kings and Sky Busters series were painted in more realistic colors and were well-received, but by this time, general economic factors were seriously affecting the ability of the company to make a profit on toys manufactured in England. Of these series, only the Sky Busters and,

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to some extent, the Two Packs survived over time. The Convoy series of articulated truck-trailers mostly American was an offshoot of the Two Packs line and continues under various guises to this day. The Matchbox brand had become the most widely collected of all die-cast toy lines see below, "Matchbox collectors". This resulted at first in the creation of several models for collectors, such as a Yesteryear model, the black Y-1 Ford Model T. These models were the first commercial vehicles in the series since the s. Economic difficulties, bankruptcy, and the post-Lesney era[edit] Due more to the economic climate in the United Kingdom at the time than to the lack of success of the Matchbox brand " all of the core ranges continued to sell very strongly " the company was in difficult financial straits by the end of the s. Following in the footsteps of Meccano Dinky , and just a year before Mettoy Corgi , Lesney became bankrupt in June , and went into receivership. The Matchbox brand name, some tooling, moulds and other assets were then sold to Universal Toys and David Yeh. Yeh reorganized Lesney and renamed the group "Matchbox International Ltd. Although the company was no longer British-owned, limited production continued in England until the mids, re-using many of the old Lesney castings, but most production and tooling was moved to Macau. It was during this period that Matchbox acquired the rights to the venerated Dinky brand, perhaps the "mother of all toy car collectibles", and united two of the most important names in die-cast under one roof. New models were created sometimes dies were also bought from competing companies , and the Dinky Collection was born. Dinky models tended to be of more recent classics particularly the s , while Yesteryears tended to concentrate on older vintages. It was also during the Universal era that the "Matchbox Collectibles" concept was developed see below, "Matchbox Collectibles". Because of high labour costs, and the lack of enough skilled workers in Hong Kong and Macau, the Universal decided to outsource its die casting to mainland China. The CJV contract was signed off with year period of validity. Dies were imported to Shanghai from Macau until the early s, when Macau finally ceased producing Matchbox toys. No dies were designed by SUTC, which confined itself to decal painting, assembling and packing. The Motor City series, Matchbox PK series, and many plastic components, were produced there between the late s and mid s. Meanwhile, Universal also outsourced its die casting capabilities in Southern China. Purchase by Mattel[edit] By , Universal was also seeking a buyer. In May , it sold the brand to Tyco Toys , the toy division of which was bought out in turn by Mattel in , uniting Matchbox with its longtime rival Hot Wheels under the same corporate banner. The rivalry between the Hot Wheels and Matchbox brands was not only a battle fought by the companies; collectors of each of the brands felt strongly about the qualities of their brand of choice. For the typical Matchbox collector, Hot Wheels were inferior in scaling and model choice, making them less desirable. There were fears that Mattel would either impose a Hot Wheels-style philosophy on the Matchbox line, or actually fold the Matchbox line into the Hot Wheels series. Early concerns of this nature by collectors were countered by assurances from Mattel that Matchbox would continue to develop its own product line independently from Hot Wheels, and that it was intended that Matchbox represent "real" and traditional vehicles, while fantasy would be placed firmly in Hot Wheels territory. To demonstrate the latter commitment, some very realistic Hot Wheels Caterpillar models were actually re-branded to Matchbox, although that did not assuage concerns about the strength of the former assurance. In , to celebrate its 50th anniversary, Sky Busters made a comeback, but with Continental Airlines as the only major airline to sponsor the product. In , Matchbox came out with a line of special-edition cars. Breaking with its commitment of the s, Mattel revamped the Matchbox line almost completely in , introducing "Ultra Heroes", a series of fantasy vehicles, as part of a "Hero City" theme. The toys proved to be unpopular, and the line was soon discontinued. The reappearance of the pre Matchbox logo, albeit without its classic quotation marks, signalled the return to the original philosophy. To signal the seriousness of the venture, and its commitment to the brand, Mattel introduced a new, second series, parallel to the standard range, celebrating the "35th Anniversary of Superfast". Models were packaged in model-specific blister packs containing not only the model, but also individual, traditional-style "retro" boxes, harking back to the Superfast boxes from about All castings were of realistic vehicles, and some castings were re-activated for inclusion in the range. The series was strictly limited in production volume, sold at a premium

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price, and was a great success. Further Superfast series were released in and However, since Matchbox Collectibles Inc. Although small numbers of Super Kings and Yesteryears were released at times, no new castings were created. Battle Kings reappeared on the market in , not as King Size models, but rather as a name of military-oriented Two Pack-style sets of regular-size models. The Dinky name has effectively been reduced to a few "re-branded" Matchbox cars on the international market normal models with "Dinky" tampo-printed onto the baseplate. No further investment in dies or tooling was made. It appeared that the classic brand, once saved by Matchbox, would be allowed by Mattel to languish or die once again. The "" or "75" series[edit] Lesney gradually increased the number of models in its standard Matchbox Series range from three in to 75 in When a new model was released, an existing model was discontinued, its number being re-allocated. This meant that dealer display stands only had to accommodate 75 models. New owners Mattel expanded the regular US market Matchbox series to models for [5] but changed it back to 75 models for This was in part due to the new concept of offering country-specific lines of models for many of the key markets, which led to the same castings being used under different numbers in different markets. In recent years Mattel , a sequential casting no. MB " unrelated to any number used in any market " is cast onto each baseplate. The relevant series number is printed on the blister pack or box. Other Matchbox ranges also had identifying numbers cast on their bases, many of which were reallocated as older models were retired and new ones introduced. The numbering conventions are listed in the Series Overview section below. However, with the exception of the Yesteryear line, which was held to 16 models for well over a decade [before being expanded greatly], there was no other case of a strict series size limitation by Lesney. Scales of models[edit] Matchbox cars are primarily made in two sizes: The smaller models "regular size"; and related series are often classified as 1: Matchbox has also manufactured cars in approx. This was the same scale as Corgi or Dinky. While the actual car models in these series tend to be around the 1: Set numbers were often reallocated in the same fashion as for "normal" series. Some sets included model variations officially released only in the sets generally, these were variant colors , while others contained additional, non-die-cast items not available without the set. Model collectibility and value[edit] This article has multiple issues. Please help improve it or discuss these issues on the talk page. This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. October This section possibly contains original research. Please improve it by verifying the claims made and adding inline citations.

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Chapter 3 : Lesney Matchbox Series

Matchbox (1) Matchbox Superfast MATCHBOX LESNEY USA Catalog Unused New Old MATCHBOX Collector's Catalogue Vintage Diecast Toy England Lesney.

Later that year a third partner joined, John W. The first toy car model was introduced in and it was a die-cast road roller based on a model made by Dinky, who were the leaders in die-cast toy production in those years. Box of a Lesney model. The real breakthrough happened when Jack Odell scaled down one of the first Lesney toys, a green, and red road roller. He did this for his daughter Ann, whose school would allow children to bring only toys that could fit in a matchbox. The other two were a cement mixer and a dump truck. Lesney decided that the models in the standard series would be numbered from 1 to 75 when a new model appeared it would take the number of an older model which would be discontinued. The next decade saw the introduction of new models, most of them British. Despite the size of the cars, the levels of detail were amazing. To be able to do this, the designer took detailed photos of original cars, sometimes even using the original blueprints of the cars. Although at first the toy cars sold poorly, kids loved Matchbox cars, and they were pretty cheap, which allowed children to buy them with their own pocket money. Lesney produced four other series of cars between and The Models of Yesteryear were introduced in and produced until It was a series of models of vehicles from the steam era and early automotive days. The Accessories Packs including petrol pumps and garages , Major Packs larger-scale models in and the King Size trucks and tractors in , were added in order to expand and diversify their production. Lesney bus number By this time the cars had interiors, plastic windows, wheels with tires and spring suspensions. Some of them included steering and in a new Auto-Steer pressure-based system was introduced. The Matchbox line included a variety of vehicles; apart from cars, it featured trailers, buses, tractors, motorcycles, and others. The new attractive models, marketed aggressively, became very popular. Matchbox took a huge hit on the American market. The UK market was also targeted by competitors so Lesney had to respond fast. Unfortunately, it took a whole year for a new line to appear. The Superfast Wheels line was finished in and it featured low-friction wheels, tracks, new car models and new colors. This allowed Lesney to return among the top companies in the field. The collectibles were made in limited quantities and sold at a higher price.

Chapter 4 : Matchbox 1 to 75 Series Parts : RecoverToy

Lesney's Matchbox Toys: The Superfast Years, , with Price Guide Concise Catalogue of Series "Matchbox" Toys by Lesney Sep by Geoffrey Leake.

Chapter 5 : Matchbox Lesney diecast toy books

WK - Matchbox catalogue I had a bunch of these. Find this Pin and more on Moko Lesney Matchbox 1 - 75 series - by Niels Benn SÃ,rensen. Matchbox catalogue This must have been my peak time for cars because I have a when bunch of the ones in this picture. I had so many Matchbox and Hot.

Chapter 6 : Vintage British Diecast Forum â€¢ View topic - 18a Bulldozer

In Michael Stannard's catalogue ["Matchbox" Series Collectors Catalogue, Spalding ISBN 0 0 X] was published & explained well the visible differences of the casting-variations with drawings.

Chapter 7 : Matchbox 1 to 75 Regular Wheels : RecoverToy

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Below you will see the models which occupied these places in the number range over the Lesney years. Each line is in chronological order reading left to right. The letter suffixes (7A, 23B e.t.c. which refer to the sequence of release of the models, are not part of the Matchbox numbering system but seem to be accepted by and are common to.

Chapter 8 : Concise Catalogue of Series "Matchbox" Toys by Lesney : Geoffrey Leake :

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Chapter 9 : Matchbox Series diecast models, (Lesney Products,)

None of the NAMC's "Catalog of all Series Matchbox Models" (second edition), the AIM's " Series Regular Wheels" catalogue (second printing,), Stannard, Houghton, or Leake ("Concise Catalogue of 75 Series Matchbox Toys by Lesney" (4th edition, reprinted)) lists any variation not already catalogued by Nick.